

OLYMPIC COAST NATIONAL MARINE SANCTUARY

OLYMPIC COAST DISCOVERY CENTER



V O L U N T E E R N E W S L E T T E R - O C T / N O V 2 0 1 3

Stay Tuned for UPCOMING EVENTS

Fri, Nov. 8th – OCDC & Feiro Joint
Volunteer Awards Ceremony

TBD – Brown bag lunch with Heidi

Our sanctuary Citizen Science Coordinator, Heidi Pedersen, will be sharing information and the latest updates on COASST (Coastal Observation and Seabird Survey Team) and marine debris monitoring programs.

TBD – Karlyn plans to schedule a winter field trip to Port Townsend Marine Science Center. If interested, please let her know!

THANK YOU ALL!

During the month of September the OCDC was only open on weekends and Labor Day. We received **520** visitors with a total of **6** docents contributing **48** volunteer hours! Due to the partial government shutdown, we were not able to remain open through mid-October and could not participate in the annual Dungeness Crab & Seafood Fest as we usually do.

CoastSavers International Coastal Clean-up

Thank you to everyone who participated in the International Coastal Cleanup (ICC) this year on Sept. 21st! Washington CoastSavers took the lead for the first time in coordinating the state's



participation in the ICC this year. More than one hundred volunteers cleaned Washington's outer coast beaches from Cape Disappointment to Cape Flattery, including beaches adjacent to Olympic Coast National Marine Sanctuary (OCNMS). CoastSavers Coordinator, Jon Schmidt, estimated that approximately 4,600 pounds of debris were collected and removed from beaches by volunteers.



It was great fun and a gorgeous day to be out on the coast! The next CoastSavers Coastal Cleanup will take place on April 19, 2014. www.forksforum.com/news/article.xm/2013-09-26_coastal_beaches_cleaned_up_under_coastsavers_initiative

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Tatoosh Volunteer Cruise!

During the week leading up to the annual volunteer cruises, the weather forecast did not look promising. But windows of opportunity emerged on Sept. 25th (COASST) and 27th (OCDC) with the wind retreating and the waves reducing to favorable levels. We excitedly climbed aboard the *RV Tatoosh* from the La Push marina, entrusting our lives into the very capable hands of Captain Rick Fletcher and NOAA Corps Officer Justin Ellis for the next two hours at sea.



OCNMS staff and volunteers exited the harbor waters passing dramatic Aka'lat (James Island), the important burial ground for Quileute Chiefs and historical fortress in times of defense. Spending time in the sanctuary from this perspective afforded us

striking views of the rugged coastline and towering seaweeds. Rick drove us past Cake Island, Sea Lion Rock, sea bird-laden islets and the Quileute Needles. Passengers "oohed" and "ahhhhed" over the charismatic megafauna, including Ocean sunfish (*Mola mola*), dolphins and porpoises, Pelican colonies, otters, and more. Observing dozens of barking and howling California and Steller Sea lions up close was the highlight, of course!



Each year OCNMS offers a cruise on *RV Tatoosh* to OCDC and COASST volunteers to provide a direct and closer observation of the sanctuary resources, and to reward them for their commitment to their volunteer work! Without our volunteers, OCNMS would not be able to accomplish some of our Management Plan objectives and we are incredibly grateful to have you!



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COASST / News from the Field

A normal increase in seabird mortality occurs at this time of year, and is reflected in the data from COASST (Coastal Observation and Seabird Survey Team) volunteers for September and October. Data from the northern Washington beaches indicate a “wreck” in the Common Murre (*Uria aalge*) population. A “wreck” is defined by surveyors finding more than 10 dead birds of the same species during a single survey. Sixty-seven dead birds were found at Hobuck Beach on one day in October, the majority being adult and juvenile Common Murres. This spike in mortality is most likely due to the intense multi-day wind storm that occurred at the end of September. Bird mortality data along the Olympic National Park beaches in October is lacking due to the federal government shut down followed by unfavorable tidal conditions. COASST predicts that the mortality rate of Common Murres will soon return to normal.

Here are some rare finds from what has washed in over the last couple of months (blogs.uw.edu/coasst):

Kathy on the South Coast of WA found a Laysan Albatross (*Phoebastria immutabilis*). These amazing open ocean birds of flight can have a wingspan of up to more than 2 m, allowing them to travel up to 100



miles with a single flap of their wings. They range from Japan to the Bering

Sea and only come onto land to breed, favoring the remote Hawaiian Islands.

Sue and Scott encountered another rare seabird, a Mottled Petrel (*Pterodroma inexpectata*), on the North Coast after the September storms. The



strongly pelagic Mottled Petrel breeds in New Zealand and migrates to the North Pacific where it concentrates around the Gulf of Alaska and Aleutian Islands.

A gas cylinder was found by Phil in the San Juan Islands.

Remember, if you find an item like this, do not



touch or attempt to move. These items should be reported to the National Response Center by calling 1-800-424-8802 or your local law enforcement.

Another team in Ocean Shores happened upon a skate egg casing, with small embryos inside. What a cool find!



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VOLUNTEER NEWSLETTER - OCT / NOV 2013

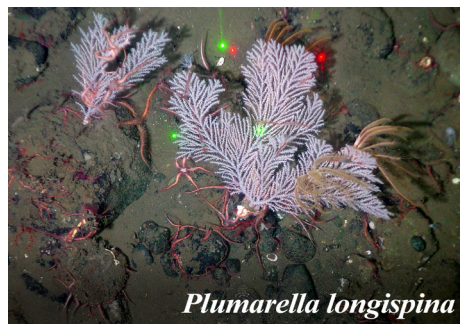
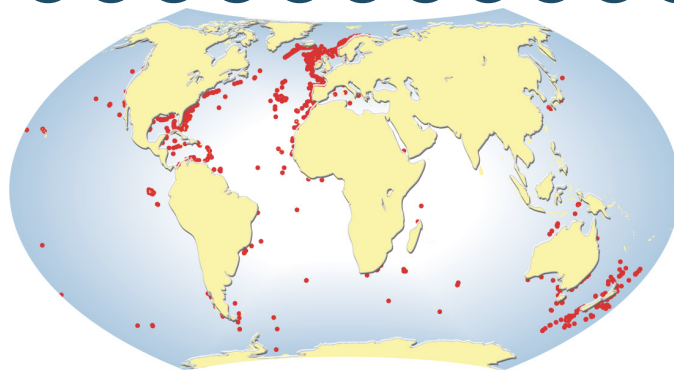
Creature Feature

Cold Water Corals

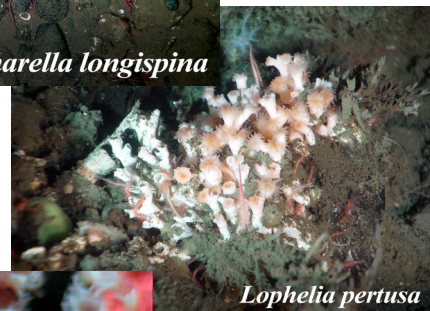
Deep sea corals are one of the most fascinating group of animals—yes, animals—in our sanctuary waters! These cold water corals belong to the phylum Cnidaria and are characterized with a hollow body and a mouth surrounded by tentacles with specialized stinging cells. Cold-water corals are generally found from 250 to 3,300 feet deep, where temperatures range from 39° F to 53° F. They are a cosmopolitan group, occurring worldwide along edges of continental shelves, in fjords, near hydrothermal vents and on seamounts. In Olympic Coast National Marine Sanctuary they have been documented in the Juan de Fuca Canyon.

Because they live below the photic zone, cold-water corals lack the symbiotic algae (zooxanthellae) living inside most tropical reef-building corals which give them the colors we typically associate with coral reefs. Cold-water corals are also found in a variety of colors, but scientists do not yet understand what causes--or is the function of-- these bright colors. They feed by extending their tentacles and straining plankton from the seawater. Growth and reproduction are extremely slow. Recent studies have found that many corals grow only about 1 cm per year and that they are long lived. One sample was recently aged to 4,700 years old. Coral reproduces asexually, by budding off new polyps, as well as sexually, by producing eggs and sperm, which unite to form free-living planktonic larvae that float in the water until they find a suitable surface to attach to and grow on. Deep sea corals provide vital habitat for a plethora of animals including urchins, sea stars, crustaceans, mollusks, polychaete worms, sponges, and fish.

Habitats in which cold-water corals are found are rarely disturbed by natural forces. Due to their exposed structure and slow growth, these corals may be especially vulnerable to seafloor disturbance, climate change and ocean acidification.



Plumarella longispina



Lophelia pertusa



Paragorgia arborea pacifica



Paragorgia arborea pacifica



Stylaster sp.